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RR RUEHPA
DE RUEHOS #0213/01 1190711
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R 290711Z APR 09
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0755
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0359
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0045
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000213

SIPDIS

BAGHDAD FOR MCCULLOUGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: EKITI ELECTION UPDATE: POLITICS AND
VIOLENCE DELAY RESULTS

REF: A. LAGOS 211
[1](#)B. LAGOS 193
[1](#)C. LAGOS 163
[1](#)D. LAGOS 112

Classified By: CONSUL GENERAL DONNA BLAIR FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The April 25 Ekiti gubernatorial by-election in 64 wards of 10 Local Government Areas (LGAs) between Dr. Kayode Fayemi (AC - Action Congress) and the incumbent Segun Oni (PDP - Peoples' Democratic Party), was marred by violence, voter intimidation by party members, general confusion in the voting process, accusations and counter-accusations of vote rigging, and unprepared police in many wards. Violence was limited to a few wards where the PDP was strongest. Local press reported that the local Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Representative in Ekiti State, Mrs. Ayoka Adebayo had fallen ill, although civil society monitors suspected that she is hiding from the media and political forces that were pressuring for her announcement. On April 28, she announced her resignation, stating that she was being pressured to do something against her conscience. A date for elections in two wards, which were cancelled because of violence on April 25 has not been announced, adding to the frustration of Ekiti residents who feel that PDP leaders, from local to national, are trying to manipulate the election results. End Summary.

Election Day: Confusion at Polls, Violence in Some Wards

[1](#)2. (C) The election reruns in 64 wards across Ekiti State resulted in some violence and harassment of some poll station workers and accredited election observers. On April 26, a coalition of civil society organizations, the Civil Society Monitoring Group (CSMG), released an interim report on the elections. In the report, the group complained of unprepared poll station workers, many of whom were young members of the National Youth Corps program who did not speak the local language and were unable to find their polling stations to start the voting in a timely manner. The report also blamed the police for allowing the violence to occur, saying they were unprepared to handle party thugs and were deployed unevenly across the state. Additionally, the report said there were problems with the flawed 2007 voter register, which omitted many voters who presented genuine voters cards to vote in this election.

13. (C) In two wards of the Oye LGA, early instances of violence and voter intimidation led polling station workers immediately to close with the elections in these two wards subsequently being postponed. In several other wards, observers wrote in the CSMG interim report that party members became more aggressive and intimidating as the day progressed. Four accredited observers affiliated with CSMG were taken by thugs, beaten, and then handed over to police who are said to be investigating the incidents. Moshuud Erubami, of Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), one of the affiliated civil society organizations, told Poloff on April 28 that the observers have since been released by the police.

Results in Ido-Osi LGA Questioned

14. (C) In the April 26 report, CSMG noted that in the Ido-Osi LGA, accredited CSMG observers were attacked and turned away from the polling sites, leading the coalition to question the authenticity of the results. This particular LGA now features in the ongoing battles over the legitimacy of the results. Ido-Osi is a PDP stronghold and the home of PDP candidate Segun Oni. Erubami and Abiodun Oyeleye of New Initiative for Social Development, a civil society organization, told Poloff on April 28 that the results from Ido-Osi did not have the required signatures of the polling station presiding officers and AC party agents verifying that the ballots were collated properly and all parties agreed that the results were accurate. Due to the failure to follow INEC procedures and questions of legitimacy, INEC Rep Adebayo has reportedly canceled polling results. (FYI: Polling in

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those LGAs which were not cancelled in 2007 gave Fayemi a lead of over 11,000 votes. In the nine LGAs other than Ido-Osi, press reports indicated a very close race, with Oni only having polled a few hundred more votes, out of over 30,000, than Fayemi. According to media reports, the disputed votes in Ido-Osi number over 15,000 for the PDP, which would be sufficient to turn the tide in favor of the PDP's Oni. The AC, however, has stated that it is impossible for the PDP voter turnout to have been so high in this single LGA. End FYI.)

Ekiti INEC Rep in Hiding, Resigns

15. (C) Despite media reports that Mrs. Ayoka Adebayo, the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) had gone missing due to a sudden illness, Erubami told Poloff that she is simply in hiding from the media and trying to escape the political pressure to announce the results prematurely. (Note: Mrs. Adebayo's husband is the cousin to former PDP President Obasanjo. End Note) However, Oyeleye told Poloff on April 28 Adebayo had been in fear of her life due to pressure from the PDP. An April 27 announcement by Maurice Iwu, INEC National Chairman, reaffirmed the Electoral Act of 2006, stating that it is the responsibility of the REC to announce the outcome of gubernatorial elections. Nonetheless, civil society monitors have expressed concern that Iwu's intention is to interfere with the results, and that he will continue to do so despite statements to the contrary. CSMG had been anticipating that Adebayo would come out of hiding and declare the outcome of the elections in the LGAs where the voting was completed.

16. (C) However, radio reports late on April 28 indicate that Adebayo announced her resignation, stating that she was being pressured to do something "against her conscience" and felt her life was threatened. The Office of the President immediately responded that it had not been informed of her official resignation. The AC stated that Adebayo should not be allowed to resign without first declaring the election results.

17. (C) Comment: Despite the violence and unrest that

occurred on the day of the elections, the violence was contained, and there was substantial voter turnout. However, due to the pressure to announce the results immediately, many voters do not feel that their votes have been counted, and the level of frustration continues to build, increasing the likelihood of ongoing violence. While the public eye is on both INEC and the REC, Adebayo's sudden resignation may serve to confirm Ekiti residents' suspicions that the PDP forced her to resign in order to replace her with a new REC who will announce results in its favor. This development is likely to increase the tension in Ekiti and suspicions of unfair elections. End Comment.

18. (U) This cable has been coordinated with Embassy Abuja.
BLAIR